



Therapeutic Services Agency, Inc.
Phone: 320-629-7600|651-224-4114|Fax: 651-925-0071

February 8, 2023

Dear Legislators on the House Education Finance Committee,

I am writing to request your consideration and support of the proposed Extended School Time legislation before you. This funding is important to students who struggle with mental health problems and are being treated in our community based Day Treatment Program in East Central MN (Pine City and North Branch locations) and statewide in Day Treatment Programs and Residential Treatment Programs.

We know these children and teens well and they are struggling with significant challenges with their mental health at young ages. It is important that as they address those primary issues that they not also add to their challenges falling behind in academic progress and school success. Your support of extended school days funding and access to more school time will offset the missed seat time they experience when they are in mental health treatment. Kids should not have to compromise their education in order to deal with their mental health problems. Nor should they have to suffer with mental health problems to secure their education. With adequate funding and steadfast commitment, compassion and responsible use of resources, our state can provide opportunity for children and teens to attend to their mental health AND secure their education!

We know that access to mental health services and education optimize outcomes for our youths to become well-functioning, healthy, contributing members of our state and THAT is something worth supporting for kids and their families, and its good for Minnesota!

Respectfully,

Cheryl Smetana McHugh, MSW, LICSW
Executive Chair



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